

## Other Benefits

- The Cooperative Bid Program **significantly increases the purchasing power** of Montana schools.
- Due to the large amount ordered through the Cooperative Bid, **items can be customized and/or produced especially** for Montana schools.
- Other school programs, like concessions and student fundraisers, are eligible to participate in the Cooperative Bid.
- Foods offered on the Cooperative Bid are analyzed by School Nutrition staff for palatability, appearance, and quality.

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*The Cooperative Bid Program was created especially for Montana schools, and exists to help them better meet the bottom line in their food service.*

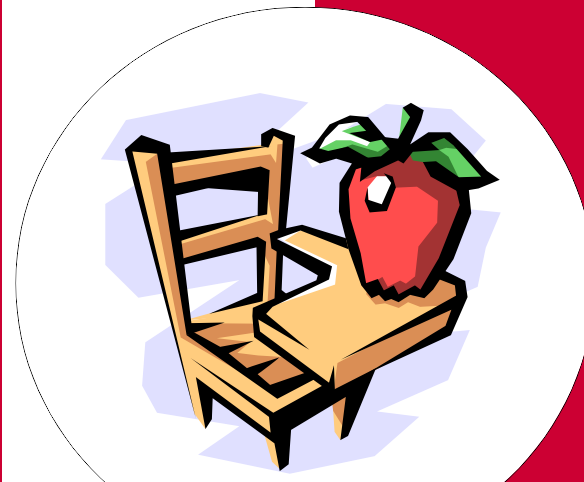


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Designed by K. A. Pullman—2005



## The Montana Cooperative Bid Program



Office of Public Instruction  
School Nutrition Programs

*"Helping our children  
grow and learn"*

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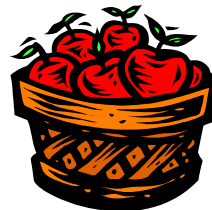
## Benefits

### of the Cooperative Bid Program

- Money spent in this program **stays in Montana** and supports Montana industry.
- Foods offered on the bid are **25-40% less expensive** than the vendor's regular prices.
- Every school gets the **same price**, regardless of location or amount ordered.
- Allows schools the **flexibility** to purchase as much or as little as needed. There are no requirements to spend a certain percentage of the school's food budget or minimum size orders.
- The program can be used as a school's primary purchasing plan, or in conjunction with other purchasing plans. There are no "mutually exclusive" agreements.
- Food ordered is **delivered directly** to any school in Montana, with no added surcharges.
- Every school is offered **personalized service** directly from the bid coordinator.
- All items offered on the Cooperative Bid are procured **in compliance** with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations for the School Nutrition Programs.
- The bid is **customized for Montana** schools. A Cooperative Bid Committee meets three times a year to provide feedback.



## Comments from Schools using the Cooperative Bid



"... in Montana, we are such individualists. You meet the needs of a great variety of programs, and I know you put a tremendous amount of effort into making sure you are offering what we want."

"Everyone did a good job and the deliveries came on time."

"We're tickled we can order smaller amounts, as our enrollment isn't what it used to be."

"Everything went very smoothly. Thank you!"

"We very rarely have any problems ... Kennie is very helpful if we need her."

"[The bid is] a great savings for our school."

## Results from a Cooperative Bid Survey:

Total survey size: 171 (all schools using the bid in Fall 2004)

Total number of respondents: 139

96 percent found the savings they received from the bid worthwhile.

95 percent said the quality of the goods received were what they expected.

## The Cooperative Bid Program Description

The Cooperative Bid Program was implemented in 1980 to assist schools in purchasing high-quality nutritious foods at reasonable prices. By combining purchase orders, all participating schools are able to receive bid items at the same price regardless of size or location.

A competitive bid is conducted twice a year in accordance with USDA regulations. The items (food, supplies, and customized products) included on the bid are determined by Montana schools.

Through the development of a new committee during the 2002-03 school year, the Cooperative Bid Program improved the items available. The committee consists of state agency staff and 30 school food service personnel from schools representing various sizes and locations in the state.

Nutrition information for all products on the Cooperative Bid is maintained and available to schools to ease menu planning activities.

Purchasing assistance is offered to schools through daily telephone contact and state or regional training sessions.